

Dear Friends,

A few days before I wrote this, I managed a walk by the sea. On such occasions, I often find myself looking at the names of the beach huts and this day was no exception. There was one particular beach hut called 'Special Sparkles.' On a day where the weather was quite cloudy this was a welcome thing to see. As I continued to walk, the sun appeared from behind a cloud and shone on the sea making it glisten and sparkle. It was a lovely view of something new and bright shining out from a dull background.

By the time we reach October, the seasons have changed. The leaves have largely (but not completely) fallen, and the initial bright colours tend to be replaced by the brown leaves underfoot. It isn't always the time of year where the landscape is at its brightest. The sun glistening on the sea was a sign of illumination and a sparkle of hope. We need signs of hope at all times, but it can be when things feel more like wet, brown leaves underfoot, that we really need to see it. God is the bringer of hope today and it is to God we turn on the days where things are more difficult.

Our sense of hope comes from our faith in what we believe. So often, we reduce hope to wishful thinking but our hope in Christ through the Holy Spirit is so much more. It comes from our belief in God and is something we have within us that means we want to share all that Jesus has done for us through the cross and resurrection with others.

Just as the sun acted as the sign of sparkling hope on the sea, as disciples we are called to be the special sparkle of hope in God's world today. This comes from our faith in Jesus, and we know that the Holy Spirit is active in the world and who will lead and guide us in God's Kingdom today.

God has chosen to partner with human beings and so we ask, how can we be a sparkle of hope to a world in need and how can we partner with God to share Jesus' message of hope to others? As I thought about this, I was drawn to Bernadette Farrell's hymn, '*Longing for light.*' We remember those who are longing for light, peace, food and shelter, knowing that many are struggling, are thirsty and cold. Seeking the Holy Spirit, this is an opportunity to help others to see the light of Christ and to see a sparkle of hope. Sometimes, we may be the ones needing that hope ourselves. May we turn to God in prayer and each other, as we seek the peace of the Holy Spirit.

As we come to the season of longer nights and shorter days, may we find the sparkles of light and hope within the world and our own lives. As Bernadette Farrell writes, may 'Christ be our light, shine in our hearts, shine through the darkness. Christ be our light, shine in your Church gathered today.'¹

God bless,
Chris

¹ Bernadette Farrell, '*Longing for light, we wait in darkness,*' *Singing the Faith* 706. (TMCP, 2011)